

"THE MOVING FINGER"

AND OTHER POEMS

MARY MATHESON

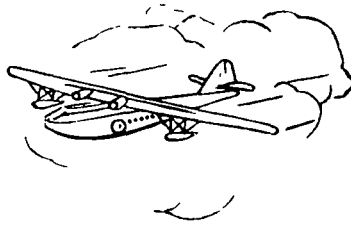
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"THE MOVING FINGER"

and Other Poems



MARY MATHESON

Author of "PRAIRIE ROSE"
"SHINING WINGS"
and "DESTINY"
"MAGIC HILL"
"OUT OF THE DUSK"

Ryerson Press, Toronto

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"Mrs. Matheson's book of Sonnets, 'Out of the Dusk,' is the product of a well-disciplined mind which is sensitive to the poignancy of life but not moved to rebellion. Her ease of expression in the sonnet is a rare gift, for it is so often a belabored piece of work. Her language is quiet and effective."

Canadian Poetry Magazine, Toronto

"I like your poem 'Magic Hill' best of all. Its lilting quality is very appealing to me."

Dr Lorne Pierce, Editor Ryerson Press, Toronto

"Mrs. Matheson has real facility in the use of rhythm and in the command of vocabulary. She has many poetic ideas and also the sensitiveness required for their development "

Professor Ira Dilworth, formerly U B C

"Many poems I do not care to read, but yours I do read over and over."

Nellie L McClung

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INVERNESS, QUEBEC

'Tis here you walked, grandfather, long ago,
And tilled the sombre soil in other years,
Or hilled the stout potatoes, row on row,
Or spilled the tiny grain beyond the meres,
All-thrilled I came not many days ago
And filled with memories so oft rehearsed,
I milled them slowly over one by one—
(In ancient tales I truly was well-versed)

But Years had hastened on, and to and fro
They spun the web of time that rushed to seize
Some strange, new world that you would
never know
Could you return, such luxury and ease—
The telephone, the plane and radio
A world to make us strong, or merely please?

TO DIANNE

Age touched my hand and said I should not die,
That in this little grandchild I shall live;
She will succeed where once I feared to try
Or found dull failure all that I could give
The wish I made, in time shall be her will,
The hopes that lifted but to fall to earth
Will in her spirit ripen and fulfil
All that I held of promise and true worth.

The joy I sought that did not come my way,
The constant searching for a safer creed
Will walk complete and comradely each day
Beside her path according to her need.
This is my prophecy, my prayer likewise,
As my less-fettered soul looks through her eyes

PART I.

The Moving Finger

*"The moving finger writes—and having writ—
moves on."*—OMAR KHAYYAM.



IN ENGLAND, 1940

Somewhere tonight beneath a quiet sky
Death rides on wings that men have perfected
To slay mankind, and having slain have sped
Back to their base nor think of hosts that die
Within their wake of fire; while far on high
Oblivious to all this shattered world
They coolly tabulate the bombs they hurled
Nor heed the echoes of earth's anguished cry.

Each star looks down, a calm cathedral light,
Serene, unchanging, on a world of change.
Who knows in future what shall be the range
Of winged squadrons—or to what great height
They shall ascend—and what their purpose
when
That future writes their epitaph again?

VANCOUVER, 1939

Harbor of myriad ships that cross the deep
Beneath a whirr of wings that seaward fare,
I see you lie all peaceful as in sleep,
Unconscious of the import that you bear
From tropic isles by still, somnolent sands,
Or seething sweep of stern Alaska's shore,
Or smiling seas by Oriental lands
That lie beyond the broad Pacific's floor

Harbor of changing tides and windswept rain,
You link the east with us, the farther west,
And stand majestic thinking of the gain
You hold for cities inland—on the crest
Of high adventure claiming greater good
Than all the members of your sisterhood

VANCOUVER, 1944

(To the lost ships)

Her heritage was sunshine and she wore
No frown upon her gentle, cultured brow,
But looked serene upon the approaching prow
Of ocean liners, asking nothing more
Of loveliness than just to watch them glide
Within her gracious harbor through the years,
Her ways were laughter, her infrequent tears
Fell softly as the moonbeams on the tide

But now she waits with wonder and concern
All unassuaged, and, knowing no disguise
Of words can quell the question in her eyes
Or promise cheer—that they may yet return—
We check the words that mock her unbelief,
And bow before the symbol of our grief

ENTRAPPED

Oh, not unbroken were the days of Peace !
Nor was their breaking sudden; from within
Came the near-cry of greed, the pall of sin
That fell regardless of the mind's decease.
This cloud that rose the size of a man's hand
In yonder distant skies enlarged and spread
Until strange darkness covered all the land
And armies marched with sullen, ominous tread.

Did war then come upon us unaware?
War that can sever cities—sod to spire?
Self-searching taught us we were lacking where
We should have been alert to guard, inspire,
Not follow blindly the loud trumpet's blare
To this dread goal, this vast Vesuvian fire.

PENALTY

For we are they who killed the thing we loved,
And thinking it could always stay unharmed
Had sought not to protect it. While they roved
Stalking on wings of steel, we unalarmed
Once heard them whisper safety in our ear
And by this liquid cadence fell asleep—
Not knowing we had aught to dread or fear
Or, in our nation's soul, a trust to keep.

The winds of ruin caught our futile dream
And tossed it to the farthest point of earth,
Till from it rose the devastating gleam
Of war and chaos, from which no rebirth
Of wisdom comes until in "blood and tears"
We learn the lesson of the endless years.

NOT SOON TO CRY

Now men in darkness move. Oh God, that soon
The light may break across the eastern hills
When men shall pity show for human ills,
And in this dawn foretell the coming noon
When all shall brothers be, and none afraid—
Or blaming heaven for the evil sent—
And introspective of the way we went—
Not censure others for the part we played.

Such discipline we need in peace or war—
Not soon to cry that everything is lost,
But to move forward as one mighty host
Knowing the game, the rules, the final score—
For if Conviction, Self-esteem be done
Then from the world the Dream of God is gone.

REBIRTH

This was the night of agony and fear
Whose birth-pangs brought to life a strong
man-child.

Robust in form, in spirit undefiled
He wakes from sleep, and so it would appear
Not yet quite conscious of his future role
Or of the pains that brought him on his way—
A nation's purge, and sacrifice—whose sway
Henceforth must claim his adolescent soul.

He dare not follow suit of knaves or fools
Whose greedy cunning brought us to the block.
He will be conscious of all hands that knock
Upon Life's door asking worthier tools
To fashion from the tortured ore the plan
Of God's true Freedom in the heart of Man.

**TO A SOLDIER WHO HAS LIVED
BUT THIRTY YEARS OF HIS
THREE-SCORE AND TEN**

He wants but forty years in which to live;
Why not? God gave. Why should man take
away?

He longs to live and to achieve his day—
To dream the dreams that time alone can give,
To see fulfilled the purpose of his dream—
And to attune his lyre to earth's fair song
Of Freedom—those enchantments which belong
To righteous living, home, and all the scheme

Of earth's true beauty. Now, dreams torture
sleep

And by their breath dissolve the goal he
sought,

For in his flesh the twisted cross bites deep—
His house of Freedom is too dearly bought,
Nor can he trust us now to wake and see
The curse of war and its futility.

THE MUTED HOUR

Poets have ceased to sing, their songs are ended.
The quiet hills they loved are seen no more
In flowering beauty. The peaceful lore
Of shepherds who had once their flocks attended
Inspires not; and Poesy befriended
By many a gentle Muse unerring, kind,
No longer stirs the channels of the mind
Or brings to life the songs that once ascended

To very Heaven. Alas, when bugles blow
The land becomes devoid of Loveliness,
The trees once praised bear down beneath the
stress
Of falling bombs; the ghastly rivers flow
With human blood. Beauty, the poet's guide,
Must from these strange sad byways, turn aside.

CHALLENGE

Now is the sacred hour drawing near
That strikes above the citadel of Fate
When war shall cease and anguish shall abate,
And man shall Freedom clasp instead of Fear
Unto his bosom. Soon a glad new Year
Shall mark the end of battle's shattering din,
And with resounding gladness usher in
The Challenge—unmistakable and clear

To all mankind. For there must ever be
In this glad time, no ill-advised demands,
No Ego that holds out his avid hands
To take by force, or even stealthily
More than is just. Thus only, shall war end
And Freedom be secured for you—my friend.

COMPULSION

But if our Youth rode out again to mend
A broken world, that laid aside the right
And sought again to substitute the might
That craved more power—that would it sonship
 send
To cower all unable to defend
The gifts they held most dear; this, then is why
We must defeat a foe that would defy
Each splendid impulse of the soul's high trend.

Because; our world has kinship in its hold
Unmarked by tyrants' perpetrated greed,
A depth of Dream which now we must unfold,
A Truth suppressed which must again be freed;
The Good adjusted and the Wrong controlled,
Fulfilment of a nation's vital creed

MARRIAGE OF MODERN YOUTH

Set in this glamorous jewel of great love
They pledge their troth unto the hidden years,
Their mutual joys and mutual tears
That flow as one are testings but to prove
The worth of each along Life's fitful way;
The greater character, the greater good
Must be the goal, even this ecstatic mood
Brought back to earth and to the common day!

These are the young of earth, the very young,
And we are old and drained of many dreams,
We prophesy, advise, and foster schemes
To make secure their future years outflung;
Unmindful as we watch our dream advance
They pity us our narrow circumstance.

THE POET'S SONNET TO THE SONNET

We fear you mightily, then veer away
To other seas whose gentle billows slip
Into faint eddies and whose golden ship
Rides smoothly on the surface of the bay.
You are a wandering dream that may not stay
In shallow waters, but must find the deep
Whose currents threaten and whose cliffs rise
steep
At each unfriendliest hour of the day.

Only the high, the strong, adventurous will
Can guide your barque through alien-haunted
seas,
Only the valiant heart and hand can still
Sea-anger that the gods cannot appease
Until your standard on a captured hill
Is lifted high with treasured argosies.

AGE

The sky is black with wild-birds bearing south;
The leaves lie sullen with their faces turned
Toward any hiding—'tis as if they yearned
To be remembered only as in Youth;
The shame of age is on them and I find
This shame in many whom I love who see
And hear and think but dimly now, ah me,
The body moves less slowly than the mind!

For grasping lamely at the passing thought
Their once-spontaneous humor is a quest
Far in the distance and more deeply sought
Since comradeship has all its old-time zest.
And then alas, the overwhelming shame
To find forgot, a once-familiar name!

AUTUMN ON LULU ISLAND, B. C.

The country is alight with Life today
For rains have drenched the dust from off the grass
And bird-notes thrill the heart of all who pass
Beneath the Autumn's strangely-potent sway.
Around the fragrant logs the crickets play
As meadow-larks recall some prairie-bluff
Where they had warbled when the wind was
 rough
Before they travelled westward on their way

To seek a land where they might be secure.
Out here where trees and grass are quick to
 thrive
They came last month knowing they could
 survive
On Lulu Island and could well endure
These gentler tempests of a western coast
And sing to us the songs we love the most.

MARCH

The summer light returns with March and brings
The tiny blades of grass, the mirrored pools,
The steady flight of all the hardier wings
That brave the air and mock all avian rules;
These are the dauntless hosts that skim the deep
And vie with each as who shall heralds be
Of all the glories that transform and keep
The heart attune to Nature's symphony.

Our steps grow soft with reverential awe
Before this change whose cause we dare not
 probe—
These tender touches ere the year withdraw
In armor stern—to don a silken robe
And walk so comradely that he must bring
The confidence that stills our questioning.

THE HAIL-STORM

I fear the woods at eve wherein I find
Lost silences that wait for some new spell
To break the stillness and again to tell
In reassuring tones, wherefor the wind
Has drawn down the clouds which like a blind
Stretch on and on obscuring every light
And leaving only darkness infinite
In breathless silence—wholly unresigned.

Till suddenly from heav'n's majestic height
A white whip wields its perilous, wild sway,
I see it lash the tottering landmarks bare;
While trees once motionless cry out in fright
The tangled weeds bemoan their disarray
AND WHEATFIELDS LIE ALL SILENT, IN
 DESPAIR.

STANDARD

To find a favorite poem has gone down
To all oblivion from the struggling brain
Expecting recognition—not the frown
Of pompous critics who have made a train
Of scourging epithets which wound and scar—
Is like a maid, who sudden sprung to fame
Through invitation from a football star
Now blushes, finding he has lost the game.

Let this be said—he who would conquer life
And rise up to the heights to clasp the hand
Of those who dare not temporize with strife—
Will put aside the fickle hosts' demand
To find in future efforts he puts forth
The "chosen few" who recognize his worth.

RENEWAL OF LOVE

Beside the brook I heard your whisper low—
Or was it my heart's throbbing as I said
You were not gone—that you still visited
These sacred precincts of the Long Ago
When flow'rs first glistened through the melting
snow
And robins' notes came liquid through the
trees—
With Love their theme, a chorus made to please
And stir the heart; for Time had willed it so.

Such Love we knew—shall it not come again?
That little Heaven here upon the earth
Which lasted for a day? Knowing its worth
Is equal to all ages that remain
And that have gone before—shall it not bring
Some song unending, and some greener Spring?

HERALD OF NIGHT

I would have been afraid when suns sank low
Upon the prairie had not the plover's cry
Amid the emerald shadows passing by
Sent his brave call for all the world to know
That when suns set, then stars became aglow
With light and gave fresh colors to the sky;
And we could still upon the moon rely
To climb the blue as ageless years ago—

A sentinel and guardian of our good.
There never came to earth so great a gift
As that, within the sunset cloudlet's rift
Beyond the twilight; giving us the mood
Of gentle Night—regal, remote and still
As Beauty walking on a distant hill.

REUNION

If I could find you as I used to know
Your welcome of dear words and gentle smile
And if my very presence could beguile
~~You into~~ love and laughter of the Long Ago
If intervening days would quiet go
Into retreat, till each one weakening, fell,
How we would storm the sacred citadel
So long elusive when we sought it so!

To capture all the joy of bygone days
Forgetting gnawing Grief had been our guest
Or care had wounded us with studied art—
We would be caught within some golden haze
Of Memory—to find us unimpressed
With aught that vexed or left us strange of heart

IDEAL

If men should laugh at me because I walk
In garments tattered and bestrewn with dust
Or smile derisively because I must
Continue; even though the people mock
I shall hold dear my secret and shall lock
My treasure in the recess of my heart,
Holding it close till I have learned this art—
The patient patching of a faded frock.

This mantle worn is what the world may see
May falsely judge, condemn, or criticize,
(They shall not e'er discern—then pity me
The cherished hope I may not realize)
Enough, I kept my fragile dream intact
With Beauty which the outer garment lacked

CROSSROADS

Far down in grave uncertainty I stood
Thinking of other days when first my love
Drew near and asked that through long months
 I prove
Time could not tempt me to Disquietude
Nor kindle in my heart the doubtful mood
Which might lead Love in other paths to rove—
Then did I loudly claim to live above
Those vagaries that haunt all solitude.

But as the months went by I ceased to muse
On all that made Love sensitive and bright
Until one day a yellow paper brings
"Dangerously wounded"—then did I choose
The corn and not the husk and on that night
I heard the sound of Love's returning wings.

PART II. (By Request)

Home Poems

MY DAYS ARE LIVED

My days are lived among the things
That count for nothing much
But washing dishes, baking bread
And stewing prunes and such,
And sometimes when the day is done
I fold my tired hands
To wonder at the many tasks
A common day demands.

I'd like to live above the hills
And laugh with scornful mirth
At those whose tasks must tie them
To the paltry things of earth,
But here's a table to be cleared
And here's a floor to sweep
While the nursery the children left
Would make the angels weep.

I'd like to sit beneath a tree—
An aspen would be best—
But Hughie needs some buttons
On his growing-threadbare vest,
And Helen needs a stocking darned
And Shirley makes a fuss
Because the hole worn in her sleeve
Is so conspicuous.

I'd like to do a-many things
But if I had to roam
Perhaps I'd come back
Welcoming the common tasks of home.

FREDDIE

(By Request)

When Freddie was just three years old
He got a brand new luit,
(Freddie couldn't sound an s
He really meant a suit.)

And once upon a Christmas-time
When the nights were cool
Freddie practised singing
With the Sunday school.

Hugh and Helen, Shirley, Beryl .
All came home at eight
Wondering how their brother
Should have been so late.

Mother hurried forth at once,
Pale and anxious-eyed,
Wishing he'd not loiter so
On the countryside.

She hastened round the corner
Through the whistling wind
When she heard a sobbing
In the lane behind.
Freddie young and filled with fear
Sang between each moan,
"Scared to be a Daniel
Scared to stay alone."

Freddie brave as lions now
Doesn't think it right
To tell when he was three years old
He almost died of fright!

MAGIC HILL

(Medicine Hat)

There is a hill
Across the down
That claims ten poplars
For a crown.

And at its feet
The grass among
A river sings
Its springtime song

Here violets
That dance in May
Perform a merry
Roundalay.
And crocuses
Bow when they've met
Anemones—
They pirouette
About the lilies
Tall and proud
That grace the lovely
Motley crowd.

The bluebird calls
In cheerful trills
Around tip-toeing
Daffodils.

And every blade
Of emerald grass
Bows low to hear
The Springtime pass

When twilight comes
With changing gleams
And weaves a net
Of mystic dreams
Instead of shadows
That alarm,
The hills take on
A magic charm

In hyacinth
And opal-grey
Cool evening shadows
Hide away
All the bright loveliness
Of day.

At night, as if
Some elfin wand
Touched all the valley
And beyond—
Like buttercups
In bowls of brown
Spring up the lights
Of yonder town,
While far above
The dome of blue
Faint lights from Heaven
Twinkle through.

THE PRAIRIES REVISITED

I saw new grandeur on the mystic plain,
A farther vision, spelling larger thought,
A radiance that could not call in vain
To hearts for which such loveliness was
wrought

A voice as music fell upon my ear,
Sometimes in laughter, sometimes soft and low,
Sometimes in mystic callings sweet and clear
Or tender tones—none save thy children know.

So would I sing thy praises for thou art
Dearer than ever though far lands I view,
Sweetest of garnered memories in my heart—
Forever old, yet strangely ever new!

THE PASSING

The autumn symphonies are well-nigh gone—
All silent lie the harps he played upon.

I did not see him as he put them by—
So gently ebbed away the melody.

Sweet were the tones—oh! infinitely sweet—
Like stars of glory falling at my feet.

I thought I saw him once as through a veil,
Then purple hills obscured his golden trail.

And though I miss his presence, all around
I trace his hallowed footprints on the ground

HOLIDAY TENT

Canvas the tent in which we lived
Nor lovely to the sight,
Each morn we folded it away
We reared it up at night—
A homey place it made for us
Along Life's travelled way,
Good times then known have long since
 flown—
We wish them back today.

So swiftly years go by, alas!
The little hands that then
Pulled back the curtains playfully
Belong to stalwart men,
The little girls are women now
Who once with charming ways
Laughed back to us so merrily
Throughout those vocal days
And though the years have sped away
Still memories are dear,
And the bright joys of tenting days
Have gladdened every year.
(A sweet, gay music comes from far
I catch my breath to hear,
And though the tent is vacant quite
I hear it loud and clear.)

And now I dream of other days
While simpler tasks demand
My half-attention, for that lure
I cannot well withstand.
Some corner of Life's garden yet
Will give me dreams of thee
Oh Tent, that in long summer days
Sheltered my loves and me!

And not alone will Dreams suffice
To satisfy the heart,
Out in the world these ones I pray
Will live a noble part
And in some corner, overgrown
With weeds of doubt and sin
Will add some touch of Love and let
A bit of Heaven in.

THE SHADELESS GARDEN

These still remain a part of me
From out the long ago,
The far-flung hills from out the dawn
The plaintive rhythm and slow
Of prairie suns that passed me by
With intermittent glow.

The tiny trees in one back yard
All withered from the drought,
Where such a paltry group of leaves
Had courage to come out
To make a shade for children's play
And winds to toss about!

I see them yet in summer's morn—
My children five who played
Beneath sparse leaves and thought they
 were
Enjoying ample shade,
For they had never known aught
But prairie lands had made.

Yet Beauty shimmered through the haze
Of that far-off time heat,
And Love and Laughter went their ways
And pattering of feet
And little hands that held our own
To make our joy complete.

I'd call the trees to me again—
Those little lean grey trees—
And all who played beneath their shade
Whose garments in the breeze
Became a fairyland of flowers;
Ah, I would call all these

Back to my side, but Time must heed
The harsh demand of years,
Their ways are parted—through man's hate
I hear their doubts and fears
And from their pillows of a night
Sounds of defenceless tears.

UNFATHOMED

I did not see it come to pass
That Spring had run across the grass
And lightly with a vagrant breeze
Had touched the heart of all the trees.

I do not know how it could be
That Spring could waken brook and tree
Nor how the crocus in the lane
Knew when 'twas time to smile again.

So gentle is the voice of Spring—
How could he call the birds to wing
Their flight from other lands to me?
I do not know how this could be.

I know not how God's loving heart
Could plan that I shall share a part
Of each good gift that silently
Yet constant shows His care for me.

CONTRADICTION

Sometimes I walk at random
When skies are strangely grey,
For always there's a part of me
Goes wandering away
Outside the town to hillside slopes
Where suns shine all the day.

The sheep there wander by the brook
That skirts the hillside fair,
And many tiny lambkins
And marigolds are there
Vieing each with other who
Shall have the least of care.

One part of me stays with me—
The other—erring child—
Cannot be homeward brought at will
From out th' alluring wild
But soon, beyond the Hills of Dream
Both shall be reconciled.

TOMORROW

And so it is tomorrow I shall see
My own prairieland, sunbathed, suncrowned,
Where joyous winds with laughter noisily
Shall run in madcap wavelets on the ground

And I shall see the dawn so far away
Smile on this vast expanse of her domain
And usher in a stormless, stainless day
Fresh from the hand of the good God again.

The meadow-lark will sing at glorious Dawn
The curlew call when Dusk is on the wane—
O Day that came so oft my dreams among
How swift your tread! I come not here again

For many days; so linger at my side
While sunset touches all with magic grace;
O Loveliness, within my heart abide
And Beauty—that no Nightfall can efface!

SPRING'S AWAKENING

I know not why the sun should shine
So grandly over all the hills,
Nor why the shadows 'neath the pine
Weave patterns round my daffodils,
Nor why the early spring awakes
The sleeping life beside the rills
That in itself a chorus makes;
Nor why the sudden song that fills
The trees with music rich and rare,
And through the meadow wide distils
Its beauty on the summer air;

Unless it be that God so wills
That hearts be happy everywhere.

EMPTY HOUSES

I love empty houses
Mid fragrant, verdant grass
And silent windows gazing
At me whene'er I pass;
They seem to hold a story
Of something rare and fine
Made more serene and kindly
By the hand of Time.

Quaint indeed the gardens
As through the sombre weeds
The wistful, eager flowers
Speak of old kindly deeds,
While little paths outgrown
With rose and columbine
Reach out a far-off welcome
To your heart and mine.

Time was the only host
I met within the door,
Methought his voice more gentle
Than e'er I'd heard before.
"They're gone," he whispered softly
And beckoned to the sun,
"This is my work and who says
It is not well done?"

For on his steady march
Time builds and Time decays,
But now I know he tarries
And quiet homage pays
To little empty houses
Where dwelt the sons of men,
And steps inside a-wishing
That they might come again.

OLD YEAR GREETINGS

The year, by fleeting days, has gone
Far o'er the hills, as one by one
These travellers disappear;
Each on his one-time staff agreed
That when 'twas time they would recede
To gather all with utmost speed
And call themselves "A Year."

I met them all in trimmest form,
Some wore the gown of Winter's storm
Yet fair was their attire;
Their griefs somehow were hid away,
Only their joys had come to stay;
(I asked not how—be that as may)
All-young was their desire.

They carried staves of sweet content,
They were on some grand mission bent
And bore with greatest ease
Beneath each arm with steady grace
In cloak of lavender and lace
A volume large on which I trace
"The Book of Memories"

I'll meet them here no more, alas—
Once only did I see them pass.
(They met to send a warning)
For on their banner I could see
"Make no regrets, press steadfastly
To better effort, bondage-free
On this fair New Year Morning."

THE RETURN

When you have come
The hours will grow more dear—
Light is my task and glad
When you are near.
Days will unfold, kind Spring return again
When your quick step will break the silence
of the plain.

When you have come
The glowing stars to me
Will sing again
In clearest litany.
Tender the hands, the lovelight and the strain
Of music low and sweet when you come
again.

When you have come
The gladness and the cheer
Are mine, the old light dawns
And the sweet year
Are freighted all with love and lasting gain;
DEAR GROW FAMILIAR THINGS
WHEN YOU HAVE COME AGAIN.

BROKEN MELODIES

On twilight eves I wait to see
The ancient moon come into view,
And every star that sings to me
Approach to keep his rendezvous.

The hills recede and far away
The curlew sings her soft refrain,
Clear lies the surface of the bay
And every wind is young again.

No faded flower or wilted grass,
No languid reed or drooping tree—
Where fragrant figures quickly pass
Clad in the night's wild witchery.

They give to all a subtle youth—
A freshness from the hand of God,
Till Rest comes down to quench the drought
Of thirsting things upon the sod.

So to my heart on twilit eves
Thy loving gifts of Calm release,
Take up the broken melodies
And light the little lamps of Peace.

MEMORY

Memory is a lone man walking up the years
Wearing navy-blue serge with cut-a-way tails,
And he has his pockets filled with laughter and
with tears
As long ago he filled them with marbles and
with nails.

And he sits him down to rest 'neath a sheltered tree
Crooning his tender songs, soft and very low,
Takes his gleaming laughter out, holds it wistfully—
Weeps that Time could take so much from the
Long Ago.

As he once lost marbles in old alley-ways
So has Time now robbed him in his own domain,
Emptied all his pockets of his treasured Yesterdays,
Bowed and smiled and rudely said "You cannot
come again."

HOME COMING

Each year he came not with the smiling spring
Nor with the summer's glow of warmth and
flowers,

He came not with September's carolling
Nor with November's reminiscent showers.

Four winters came and went and yet each dim
Approaching dawn saw not her falling tears
For Hope had held them hidden and for him
She kept her poise throughout those wistful
years.

And then he came! All Time was swept away
In exaltation of his glad embrace,
And as the windblown leaves of Yesterday
The pent-up tears rained down her careworn face.

GYPSY TENT

I always wanted
A garden wall
Of snow-balls white
And lilacs tall,
And mountain-ash
With branches spread—
Its great, green leaves
And berries red.
Roses a-plenty
With color ripe
And eves that beckon
To whispering life
Of low-toned birds
Who all day long
Feed hungry babes
With happy song,
And a moon that dances
In flying gown
All silv'ry white
Mid shadows brown.

But I never had
A garden wall
Of snow-balls white
And lilacs tall,
Nor all the other things
I willed
That ever fairy fingers
Thrilled.
Instead, I owned
A gypsy-tent
And wide horizons
That never lent
The gentle peace
Of branching trees,
Of homing birds
Or drowsing bees

But how I love it!
My prairie wide,
My heart grows warm,
I cannot hide
The thrill I feel
Of tender love
For all the world
Below, above
These far horizons
Which ever keep
Their sacred vigil
While I sleep
And call to me
As no garden can
Of love to God
And fellowman

AT NIGHT

Before I close my eyes at night
And bid the day's long toil farewell,
No noise of conflict can repel
Or drive away the sudden light
That floods my soul now bathed in rest
Of quiet thought or silent quest.

I lay aside the clothes of care
And fold the garments of my toil,
My hands are cleansed from stain of soil,
I clasp them gently as in prayer
I think of loved ones far away
Who come no more at close of day.

And of the loved ones who near by
Have made my day of life so bright
I ask protection through the night
For all, and then come silently
Good angels of Kind Thoughts who keep
Their sacred vigil while I sleep

"OLD ORCHARD" CAMP

The road went winding, circling through
The pine-trees and the alder grove,
And when they called I followed you
As we would seek the ones we love.

Flow'rs rose from out the grasses green
And calling, bade us follow on
To where the daisies slept unseen
And whispering lilies sought the dawn.

They waited us to enter where
The lake lulls campers to their sleep
And lark-songs soar into the air
And gothic boughs a vigil keep.

Is it the stillness—or the peace
Old Orchard brings—that calls you home
With plaintive cries that will not cease
Until you come—until you come?

A NEW SONG

She sowed a crippled seed
Upon a fertile plain—
Broken and bruised indeed
How should it grow again?

She put a broken heart
Into a noble task
To play an hidden part
Behind a smiling mask.

She asked not how seeds grow
Nor how such hearts can bring
New life to Life—
She did but know
That on the plains rare flowers blow
And oftentimes the heart in woe
Its sweetest song will sing.

TO MY LITTLE SON IN HEAVEN

To Him is given the gentle hand
And kindly word; no reprimand
For errors done—no ardor chilled
By thoughtless threat, no unfulfilled
Rebuke or promise. Theirs to give
The training wise and positive.

Had he remained he would have felt
A timid wonder as he knelt
At night beside his tiny cot;
No asking 'wherefore' and 'why not'—
For there 'tis plain and understood
The way from Wrong, the way to Good.

Some bright and clear-cut guiding star
Leads him to Love. No cruel war
Blights all his finer senses now—
He walks with honor on his brow
Won for his service—heights attained
Through raptural devotion gained

No anxious period in Youth
When in sincere desire for Truth
To seek in agony and strife
The ways of God, the facts of Life—
And no succumbing to the force
Of human passion—no remorse;

There we may go when day is done,
Our homely, tattered garments on,
Bearing through dust and toil and grime
The marks of devastating time
He'll still our fears, allay our shame;
He'll call us lovingly by name—

* * * * *

Till journeying with these blest, we may
Grow young and pure and fair as they

PART III

Easter

SIGNATURE

I read in the lines of a leaf's thin vein
And in a bird's light iridescent wing,
In Spring's soft advent, Summer's vanishing,
In warmth of sun and cool of evening rain—
The message God has written once again.
As in a letter where the actual thing
Is more ecstatic, loving, challenging
Than that within expressed—we try in vain

To comprehend that which might be revealed—
Proclaiming it beyond the human heart;
So it is thus—by sweet and simple art
He would teach meanings hitherto concealed;
And in each humble gift show every hour
Eternal truths of resurrection power.

O. WOULD THAT I COULD SLEEP

O, would that I could sleep, and sleeping, dream
That men forgot their feuds and all were one
And Time was as it had been ere the sun
Descended into Night and Life's clear stream
Flowed to a sea of hate, whose stagnant gleam
Rose phosphorescent on the midnight air,
Its lurid light offensive, unaware
The poisons rising from its base regime.

O, when shall we be wise? And, filled with fear
Of these dark wanderings, find a sure repose?
Have we no virtues infinitely dear
To free us from our devastating woes?
We would return O God—this is our prayer—
To Thy pure heights, Thy spirit-searching air.

GOLDEN THE DAY

Golden the day that brought You back to life
All-edged with white by lilies fair that grew
So tall and fragrant and with fairer hue
Than aught yet visualized. The world was rife
With glory on that resurrection morn—
The cloudless sky, the golden, gleaming sun
Restoring Beauty when the storm had gone—
"So grant" He prayed "a day of Peace be born."

For He alone who knew the heart's deep hate
Could fashion such capacity for Love
As can transcend all evil, can remove
The lust of greed and power, the accursed state
That binds men's souls, can hurl into the dust
Those hazards high in which men put their trust.

REJECTION

This Doom of Night, this glad Release of Day
In that first glorious resurrection tryst
Have brought from death the victory-crowned
Christ
To hail the harried pilgrim on his way;
"For Morning in men's hearts has come to stay,
The warm full dispensation of the Word
Is made complete at last through Christ our Lord,
The brand of hate forever cast away."

'Twas thus they spoke—the living truth revealed
In that still dawn, so filled with Love and grace—
So vast-extended to each Time and Race!
Must this fair vision now be tragic-sealed
And we who lost our way across a void
Of inner darkness see the Dream destroyed?

EMBLEM

Even if there were not an Eastertide
With lilies fair to mark the regal day,
And signals of the fast-approaching May
When new life springs to every country-side—
If there were no expressions nation-wide
Of hallelujahs sung in ecstasy
Still in our hearts this hope would ever be
That Life must triumph, Death must be defied.

How gracious of our Lord so long ago
To choose this time with earth so passing fair
To meet the needs of men and to bestow
Full reassurance of the hope they bear;
To indicate His truth on every hand
Lest some might challenge, some ~~might~~
*mis*understand.

THE MESSAGE

One said, "From out the darkest hour of night
There comes the Dawn." Just then the comely sun
Sent its first rays to acclaim the day begun,
While in the doorway stood in armour bright
Two angels beckoning with slender hand,
"To life, to life, dear Lord," they cried, as He
Rose from His couch of death so tremblingly
Eager and joyous He could understand

* * * * *

The portent of the message from His home
As He came forth in half-light of the Dawn.
"My brethren," He cried softly, "Peter, John,
James and Simeon—now that ye have come
And seen Love's miracle—go bid men say
'There is no hate too deep to die today'."

THE GRACIOUS HEART

Oh Christ, bring Easter to our hearts today—
This warring world is weary of its Death
And fain would turn to Thy life-giving breath
For strength to walk again the gracious way:
The night is long, give us desire to pray
(With strength to make our utterance sincere)
"God make again the Easter message clear
That when Dawn breaks the first illumined ray

Will find our hearts turned to that happy morn
When in the hallowed walls of Joseph's tomb
The first faint dawning fell across the face
Of Jesus; grant a strong, new faith be born
Transcending creeds—the old, sepulchral gloom
Of empty service grow replete with grace.

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